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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0708

INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE

RUEAHND/CDR JTF-BRAVO IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RULGPSU/COMSOC SOUTH IMMEDIATE

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUMIAAA/USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 000944

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/20/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFH01: ZELAYA CLAIMS TO BE IN HONDURAS

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) At 1040 local (1240 EDT) local pro-Zelaya Channel 36 announced that President Zelaya had returned to Honduras and was already in Tegucigalpa, at the UN Building. Although such rumors had arisen many times since the June 28 coup, Post immediately began calling sources to determine whether this report was true. The Ambassador called Honduran Charge d'Affaires to the United States Enrique Reina, who said he was in New York awaiting Zelaya's arrival there as scheduled for participation in the UNGA. Reina said he still expected Zelaya in New York, but recommended the Embassy get in touch with First Lady Xiomara Castro de Zelaya to be certain. At 1100 local (1300 EDT) the First Lady then confirmed by phone to the Ambassador that President Zelaya was with her and they were both in Honduras, though they would not specify where.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador then spoke with President Zelaya, who said his decision to return had been last-minute, and he did not seek to foment conflict. He asked the Ambassador for assistance in arranging a visit to Honduras by a senior State Department official or OAS official in order to move forward on implementing the San Jose Accord right away. The Ambassador said he felt Zelaya's sudden return was a dangerous and reckless move, and the Ambassador urged Zelaya to make a statement calling for calm from his supporters. He then informed Zelaya he would contact the Department immediately.

¶3. (C) The Ambassador spoke shortly afterward with OAS Secretary General Insulza, who stated he understood Zelaya was in the Brazilian Embassy in Tegucigalpa, which corroborated other Embassy sources on Zelaya's whereabouts. Insulza agreed a senior official should be sent to Honduras as soon as possible, and said that he would be in touch with Costa Rican President Arias, who was in the air at the time, and President Zelaya.

¶4. (C) While rumors were being passed over the airwaves, Zelaya's Foreign Minister Patricia Rodas broadcast an announcement from Nicaragua calling on all of Zelaya's supporters to gather at the UN building.

¶5. (SBU) As of 1245 local (1445 EDT), a medium-sized crowd (1,000-5,000), which had initially gathered outside the UN building, has begun moving toward the Brazilian Embassy, which is located a few blocks away from the U.S. Embassy. Security forces have arrived on the scene to provide crowd control. Helicopters are circling the area.

¶6. (SBU) The RSO has issued a warning to all Embassy personnel and families to avoid any unnecessary travel until further notice. Consular Section is preparing a warden message for American citizens. An EAC is scheduled for 1400 local (1600 EDT) to assess the security situation further. At present, there are no indications of crowds at or in the vicinity of the Embassy, and the Embassy is not/not closed.

¶7. (C) The Ambassador spoke to regime Minister of Security Jorge Rodas and urged him to do everything he could to avoid violence. The Ambassador also has authorized DAO and MILGP commanders to contact their Honduran Armed Forces contacts to urge them to do all they can to avoid violence.

LLORENS